MOTIVATE MICHIGAN

"MAKING PRISON TIME PRODUCTIVE TIME"

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Calls for Collaboration

Captured Words Free Thoughts CWFT is a magazine based out of the University of Colorado Denver that publishes poetry, essays, and artwork from incarcerated men and women to offer testimony from America's prisons and prison-impacted communities. We're calling on folks to consider submitting short think pieces on either topic: a) COVID in prisons and prison-impacted communities, or b) what the Floyd-inspired protests mean for the future of policing, incarceration, and systemic racism. If you're interested in authoring an essay, submissions should be submitted by August 1 and no longer than 1,000 words. You can send your essay via email to stephen.hartnett@ucdenver.edu
or by mail to
Stephen John Hartnett/CU Denver
1201 Larimer St, Room 3016
Denver, CO 80204

70 Million Podcast documents how locals are addressing the role of jails in their backyards. In preparation for an upcming episode about voting from jail, reporter Pamela Kirkland is interested in talking to readers on the inside to talk about the upcoming election and expanding access to the ballot for detainees in jail. She can be contacted via jpay, you can request to be added to the jpay account by emailing directly PamelaN.Kirkland@gmail.com 70 Million is a member of The Democracy Group, a collective of podcasts exploring the meaning of democracy today.

Donate Your Vote - Michigan MPRCA organizers are collaborating with Emancipation Initiative organizers to develope a program that most effectivly serves the state of Michigan using the foundation that they've built in Massachusetts. As we build out this voter partnership program we are inviting people incarcerated in Michigan to sign up to participate using the form included within

Petition Pop Ups As the state opens back up and we approach our last weeks of canvassing, there are a series of dates and locations where friends and family who are interested in signing the petition, picking up sheets or turning them in can connect with our campaign.

Direct your network to find the most updated list of pop up locations on our facebook page:
https://www.facebook.com/RepealTISMyth

AN ID TODAY IS A VOTE TOMORROW
SPREADTHEVOTE.ORG/DONATE
SOS is month's behind and you need an ID to vote in Michigan on November 3, 2020
We can help you friend or family member
They've never had a state ID card
They've had a state ID card, but it's expired or suspended
They need a new state ID card but can't find their birth certificate or marriage license
Have them email so that we can order their documents, schedule an appointment with the DMV and get their ID in time for the 2020 election
amani@spreadthevote.org

MPRCA Update: Where does MPRCA go from here?

by Amani Sawari | July 1, 2020 | @Sawarimi

With the Coronavirus claiming the lives of hundreds of incarcerated citizens across the nation and Michigan's prisons being one of leadng culprits, the wound that TIS laws have created (and continue to create) over the last 2 decades have been exposed. People now realize that mandated long term sentences are not only cruel and unusual, but are also over-punative and unsustainable, financially (medically) especially. Right now officals are scrambling to try to cover it up, but the prison system's failure to rehabilitate is an ever festering wound, that's bleeding out faster than officals have equipped themselves to handle.

We don't know yet whether MPRCA will be on the ballot but we do know that Michigan sentencing laws have to change through the repeal of TIS. Whether that be with the simple reinstatement of Good Time or the development of an entirely new system, we don't know yet, but we have to keep legislators' feet to the fire in order to incite progress in this area of legislation. We have the national spotlight right now so as we close out the Canvassing period of this campaign here are some things to keep in mind.

In May prior to the petition submission deadline. SawariMedia filed a federal suit against Gov. Whitmer, 4:20-cv-11246-MFL-MJH - SawariMedia LLC et al v. Whitmer et al, in order to seek a remedy that would alliviate the burden that emergency orders pertaining to contaning the coronavirus created for people's initiatives seeking the ballot.

In June the court ruled that it would be unconstitutional for our initiative to be excluded from the ballot under the original requirements set by the state which included a 340,047 signature threashold and a May 27, 2020 deadline for submission. The court instructed the state to adjust their requirements to aliviate the burden on citizens seeking the ballot. The state responded with an extended deadline (Jul 6, 2020) but refused to reduce the signature threashold, which we refused. The judge maintained his opintion that an extended deadline alone would not be a sufficent remedy.

Tthe state has appealed to the Sixth Circuit Court in an attempt to keep MPRCA off of the ballot. These preceedings have not yet begun, but as we await the Sixth Circuit Court's decision we will continue to strive to collect even more signatures in order to meet the original signature threasheold. We need at least 400,000 signatures to account for a possible invalid signatures. We are asking that all sheets be mailed in by July 16, 2020.

Open letter to Governor Whitmer

by Mike Thomasi | June 29, 2020 | Saginaw

Governor Whitmer:

Why are you trying to suppress the voices of Michigan's minority communities from being heard in the upcoming general election?

During your campaign you told us that you would be a champion for the people of Michigan. You promised us that you would listen to the voices of all Michiganders. So why are you now fighting so hard to keep a criminal justice reform initiative off of the 2020 ballot? Do you not believe that the voters in Michigan are intelligent enough to decide such an important issue for themselves? When it comes to a subject that seems to affect primarily the minority communities, why are you trying to deny those same communities a way in which to make their voices heard? Shouldn't they have a say in a program that costs $1.9 Billion in taxpayer dollars? Especially given the fact that only two other states in this country have the same type of program.

Can you explain why with one hand you were willing to make such substantial accommodations to make sure political candidates could get on the ballot (Esshaki vs Whitmer), while with the other hand you were ordering your Attorney General to fight the peoples' ballot initiative with the full force of the State?

As of June 24, 2020, a federal district court has issued four separate and distinct rulings in the case of SawariMedia LLC vs Whitmer. In each of those decisions, the Court highlighted the fact that the State of Michigan has violated, and continues to violate, the constitutional rights of the Plaintiffs, by denying them fair and equal access to the 2020 general ballot. And now you are appealing to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. Why?

This initiative is not some type of radical plan to destroy our local and state governments. It actually looks to bring us in-line with what the federal government and 47 other states are already doing. (www.mprca.info/petition) This initiative offers a clear way in which to save the State hundreds of millions of dollars, which can then be reallocated to not only our children's educations, but to also fix your "darn roads."

So again, Governor Whitmer, why are you trying to suppress the voices of Michigan's minority communities from being heard in the upcoming general election?

Voting Partner Program Launches in Michigan

by DonateYourVote - MI | July 1, 2020 | donateyourvote.org

In 2018 Emancipation Initiative in Massachusetts launched #DonateYourVote, an independant civic engagement project that established 140+ pairs of incarcerated and free-world participants. Today, with the presidential election leaving many voters feeling disillusioned with democracy, MPRCA organizers decided to collaborate with Emancipation Initiative to expand their #DonateYourVote 2020 effort and engage even more people in both Michigan and Massachusetts.

Whether or not we'll see the Michigan Prisoner Rehabilitation Credit Act on the ballot this year is still not yet set in stone, but as we inch closer to that reality we want to make sure that incarcerated supporters' voices are heard in the November 2020 presidential and statewide elections.

As we build out this voter partnership program we are inviting people incarcerated in Michigan to sign up to participate using the form on the right, and mailing it back to the address listed. Your submission of this form authorizes us to pair you with an outside participant seeking to vote on behalf of someone who is disenfranchised. We collect information about your intended county in an attempt to pair you with a participant from that area, but please keep in mind that may not be possible. Participation forms must mailed back to us by August 21st in order for us to complete pairings in time for the election, November 3, 2020. Don't wait to let us know that you are intrested, the sooner we recieve your form, the sooner you will be paired and we intend to have all pairings completed by September 21st.

From Emancipation Initiative: Our community members who are incarcerated inside of prisons are excluded from participating in elections and all other aspects of the political process. This means that the policies that ultimately determine their quality of life, their release dates, their sentencing, and their rights (and lack thereof) are decided entirely by other people. The #DonateYourVote campaign aims to reverse this injustice by allowing people on the outside to donate their vote to people on the inside. Your donation allows the voices of our community members on the inside to be heard in this election cycle.

Participant expectations:
Once you are paired you will receive an invitation from SawariMedia on jpay. You will be sent the name of your partner and the county in which you will be voting. They will be sent your contact information to add you on jpay, after which you should receive a message from them to begin corresponding directly. If you have questions about or throughout the partnership those can be directed to SawariMedia on jpay.

With the submission of the form below you invite us to pair you with someone in Michigan who intends to vote in partnership with someone in prison who's ineligible to vote due to felony disenfranchisement. Please answer the questions below to be matched to #DonateYourVote!

Mail completed forms to the return address for this publication
PO Box #2278
Detroit, MI 48202

Please note that the amount of pairings we can make depend on the number of outside participants we recieve.

MPRCA presents

#DONATEYOURVOTE

Sign up to receive a voting partner

Tear off and Return this Box

INSIDE PARTNER INFORMATION

Name:

PIN:

Mailing Address:

OUTSIDE PARTNER INFORMATION

Preferred County:

Preferred City:

Preferred Method of Communication (Mail or Jpay):

TIMELINE

July/August: Establish Partnerships
September: Initial Communications
October: Inside partners receive proxy ballot
November: Outside partners receive proxy responses in time to vote

PURPOSE

Our goal is to build more pathways of communication and collaboration between people in prison with like minded community members in their area to help influence the 2020 election to be more inclusive of the views and perspectives of disenfranchised citizens.

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SawariMedia

Amplifying Marginalized Voices

Protecting Prisoners' Right to be Informed

SawariMedia is focused on amplifying marginalized voices, particularly those impacted by mass incarceration, to promote narratives that positively contribute to improving the conditions of prison to better serve incarcerated citizens and their families. We develop print and digital media that keep supporters informed on our campaigns both sides of the wall. We know that without voting rights, elected officials have no incentive to keep incarcerated citizens informed about the work they are doing or to improve the conditions of prison to better serve incarcerated citizens.

Our goal is to address this gap in communication between prisoners, as constituents to their elected officials by keeping people in prison informed of how policy changes effect them. Currently SawariMedia does this through publishing two printed newsletters to serve incarcerated subscribers. The quarterly Nationwide Right2Vote Report has over 1,200 subscriptions from people in prion in hundreds of facilities across 30 states. The monthly Motivate Michigan Newsletter has over 600 subscriptions from people in prison in 17 facilities across the state of Michigan.

Connection

Our printed newsletters build community between people in prison and jails with their families, friends and advocates.

Promotion

We protect people's right to be informed while incarcerated. We publish reports, opinion articles, poetry and artwork developed by field experts.

Advocacy

We follow and advocate for new legislation led by impacted people. We follow changes in policy that protect their human rights.

Get in touch:

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